

Barnham Parish Council

Chair: Cllr John Bauer Vice Chair: Cllr Ed Wyer

**Minutes of an extra ordinary Meeting held on
Thursday 13th February 2025, 7.00pm Venue: Barnham Village Hall IP24 2NG**

In attendance:

Cllr John Bauer (Chair), Cllr Ed Wyer (Vice Chair), Cllr Matthew Hawthorne,
Cllr Susan Watson, Cllr Adrian Webb.

Clerk/RFO: Pauline Smith

No members of the public were present.

1. **Apologies were received and accepted from:**
Cllr Helen Beck and Cllr Martin Belsham
2. **Declarations of Interest**
A query was raised with regards to Cllr Bauer's potential interests with this application.
Cllr Bauer lives opposite the site. However, he does not have a direct beneficial financial (personal pecuniary) interest in the site or application.
Cllr Bauer does have non-pecuniary interest due to the proximity of his property to the site.
Cllr Bauer's knowledge with regards to the activities at the site is considered beneficial and as a consequence Cllr Bauer's involvement in the discussion was permitted.
3. **Approval of minutes of the meeting held 14th January 2025**
Deferred to March meeting
4. **Public Forum:** No members of the public were present, and no written questions or comments had been received.
5. **Planning:** To consider the parish council's response to the following planning application consultation received from West Suffolk Council.

DC/25/0111/FUL | Planning application - a. change of use of existing building to general industrial (use class B2) b. retention of replacement cladding to walls and roof and roller shutter doors and external dust extraction plant | Station Yard Station Road Barnham Suffolk IP24 2PD

Discussion:

The current classification for this unit is currently B8 (Storage or Distribution).

Councillors discussed this application in detail, highlighting the failure to apply for planning permission (in 2022) for change of use but then commencing to utilise the unit for manufacturing purposes (fire doors).

Whilst this purpose is not unacceptable, the failure to apply for the relevant permission which - it is expected - would have been conditioned to ensure that necessary criteria were met, is cause for serious concern.

Since commencement of operations (prior to 2023), nearby residents have been subjected to an unacceptable level of noise pollution by a sound described as a constant high-pitched drone, from early morning to late afternoon – stated within the Acoustic Consultant’s documentation to be 6am – 2.30pm. The times of operation are generally considered to be correct although it was mentioned that it has been heard to continue beyond 2.30pm.

Despite approaches to and by West Suffolk Council Planning Enforcement to the company (Gerda) there has been a failure take action to eradicate the noise/sound.

Despite not exceeding decibel limits, the noise is psychologically distressing and affects daily life, the tonal quality described as being akin to Chinese water torture.

The impact of this is to curtail residents’ enjoyment/use of their gardens during the daytime hours of operation as well as impacting on sleep due to the early hour at which the manufacturing process starts. (Start time 6am: it is noted that the operating hours of NRG are conditioned from 7am.)

The detailed noise report submitted by the Acoustic Consultants (Sharps Redmore) and available on the website within the application documents, details that the assessment demonstrates the necessity for mitigation measures to reduce potential noise impact on local residents.

The report (by Sharps Redmore) details the main sources of the noise/sound as being the flex connector that enters the sawdust lorry from the dust extraction system and the fan/motor at the other end of the extraction system, together with mitigation measures. However, a final comment notes the possibility of other noises becoming more apparent once the mitigation measures suggested have been carried out, requiring further investigation.

Times of operation within planning application:

6am – 16.30 Monday to Friday. (currently operating to 14:00)

6am – 14:30 Saturday (not currently operating on Saturdays)

Councillors considered that the extension of hours from those currently being operated is unacceptable, and wholly object to the inclusion of Saturday working. *It is highlighted that formally this cannot be considered an extension of existing hours since there is no permission in place at present.* (Impact on residential amenity)

Highways:

The site is directly opposite/close to residential properties, therefore any increase in the operation will have an impact on residential amenity.

Additionally it was highlighted: Any increase in operations whether from noise or traffic/vehicular movements will exacerbate the issues already being experienced with NRG (in relation to which enforcement action has been taken and issues are ongoing.)

Resolution: Councillors **unanimously** resolved to **OBJECT** to this application. However, the parish council will request that if West Suffolk Council is minded to grant consent for this application that strict criteria are to be imposed.

Actioned: Clerk

Attachments:

Copy of response to West Suffolk Council.

Copy of report from Sharps Redmore (Acoustic Consultants)

6. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 11th March 2025, 7pm

Barnham Village Hall, Mill Lane, Barnham. IP24 2NG

The Meeting closed at 7.25pm

Minutes signed as an accurate record

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11th March 2025